

## A Gray Day.

Forth from a sky of wintry gray  
Pours down the soft, persistent rain,  
And she for whom I sigh in vain,  
Who makes my bliss, now makes my pain,  
Being far from me this autumn day.

So far away:  
Upon the waters cold and gray  
No floating sail appears in sight—  
The dull rain and the humid light  
No wind has any heart to spite,  
This dreary, weary autumn day,  
With low away.

Where she is may make not be gray,  
But sunlight fills the room, and she,  
Ah, where she is, were I there,  
Skies might be blue, or might be fair,  
And I not heed, so she this day  
Were not away.

No gull wings out 'twixt gray and gray—  
All gray, as far as eye can reach;  
The sea too listless seems to speech,  
And vaguely tries upon the beach,  
As vaguely she this autumn day.

Is far away:  
Ah, like that sea my life looks gray—  
Like a forgotten land it lies,  
With no light on it from her eyes,  
Lovely and changeful as those skies  
'Neath which she walks this autumn day.

So far away:  
But they shall pass, those skies of gray,  
And she for whom I sigh in vain,  
Who makes my bliss, now makes my pain,  
Still turn my gray to gold again,  
Being not, as now, that future day.

So far away:  
—Philip Bourke Marston.

## The Sabot and Violin.

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF PAGANINI.

Toward the last of September, 1832, the artistic world of Paris was deeply affected upon learning that Paganini, the celebrated artist, was very ill. He was seized with a violent fever at the close of a concert, where he had been the star and only attraction.

Kind friends and warm admirers did all in their power to ameliorate his sufferings, but without avail. Day after day passed, and still the condition of the much-beloved artist did not improve. His physicians became alarmed and urged upon him the necessity of taking a rest of several months.

A beautiful morning in the month of October he bade adieu to the capital he had filled with his merited renown. At that time there was a celebrated hospital near Paris, which was only frequented by distinguished invalids, and was the Villa Letetiana, named without doubt in memory of the ancient Letetia. This fine edifice was situated in the center of a pleasure garden which overlooked a beautiful and heavily wooded park. There were shady groves and walks for dreamers, private drawing-rooms for the lovers of games and conversations, and private apartments for those who preferred the "chamber" in tete-a-tete with the last novel. It was days were spent in promenade up and down the most retired part of the garden, and when tired, they would hasten to the room to read and read a package of letters, yellow with age, to which a fresh one was added from time to time.

Among the inmates of the Villa Letetiana there were four old ladies who had become warm friends on account of their common love for card playing, and the secluded life which Paganini persisted in leading seemed to cause them much annoyance.

"Indeed," said one of them, "I do not say it of a great man. I do not perceive anything remarkable in him, in fact, taking him all in all, he is not like other men."

"As for me," said the second lady, "when I heard he was to become one of our number I would greatly prefer that he should be a simpleton, who would frequently enliven our promenades and soirees with his wonderful music, but behold how we are treated. He rarely deigns to approach us, and whenever he is requested to favor us with a little music he calmly shakes his head and retreats at once. He is a bear—a real savage."

"Ah," said the third lady, "you do not understand his case yet. Paganini, my friends, is a simple miser. Do you wish to assist in charitable concerts?"

"It is very strange," said the fourth lady, "how great men lose prestige upon acquaintance. I do not know but that he is of some account on the stage. But here I do not know him, as far as sociability is concerned, I would prefer to associate with the gardener."

"Oh! do not hesitate, I pray you," replied the youngest of these ladies. "As for my part, I would greatly prefer almost anybody to him. Did you ever see a man manifest so much indifference, yes, even contempt for ladies' society?"

"I am of your opinion; but come, my ladies, I have a scheme to submit to you that has just popped into my head. We must give this sleepy bear a shaking."

The celebrated violinist, however, continued to live in the usual manner, and slowly regained his strength. But one would hardly have believed him to be any letter, he was so pale and thin. His physicians rightly forbade him doing any mental work, and the great musician, entirely deprived of his art, passed the autumn days in a sort of intellectual somnolence, which was most beneficial to his feeble state.

He never became a victim to loneliness. As a wood carver Paganini was without a rival. Four or five hours he sat in his cozy little room and skillfully handled chisels, knives and other sharp-edged instruments.

While the artist partook of the fragrant coffee, delicious rolls and fruit, Louise, endeavoring to amuse him by relating some of the incidents which transpired at the hospital. From time to time she succeeded in causing a faint smile to appear on the face of the old ladies.

One morning Louise entered Paganini's room at the customary hour, but the greeting was pronounced in a most doleful tone. For eyelids were badly swollen, her cheeks void of color, and a very sorrowful expression played around the finely-cut mouth.

"What is the matter, my poor Louise?" asked Paganini. "Oh! I am so unhappy!" Then she hesitated, apparently checked by the flat-falling tears and child-like sobs that came in quick succession. "My dear Henri loved me too much to do anything so cruel as that."

"Can he not procure a substitute?" "Oh! yes, sir," she replied. "Very well, my dear child. Dry your tears, and we will endeavor to remedy the evil, however serious it may chance to be."

"Henri has drawn an unfortunate number," said Louise, speaking very rapidly. "He must join the army and leave for Lille on the morning express."

"A substitute! How could we ever dream of raising such a sum?" "Would it require very much money?"

Fifteen hundred francs are demanded, on account of the prospect of war. "Well, your misfortune is not so serious, as you say. Why have we not taken up a subscription?"

Louise warmly thanked the violinist, dried her tears with the corner of her white apron, and disappeared, with a face radiant with joy and hope.

Winter advanced, and Christmas, with its feathered garb of snow and crown of holly was on the threshold once more. It gently rapped at the door of every dwelling, and at this signal families assembled around the cheerful hearth, their hearts warmed with love and good-will to man. The little children filled their shoes with hay and placed them in the fireplace, that Santa Claus might see them right away when he jumped down the chimney with all the presents they had ordered; and the little homeless ones came and offered a prayer at the door which brought in the angels, who were bled and stiff with the piercing cold.

At the Villa Letetiana each one celebrated Christmas according to his pleasure. The old ladies, who were an animated game of cards; while Paganini, seated in a secluded corner of the room, absorbed in an interesting book, was wholly unconscious of the time.

Suddenly the door opened and Louise entered. "A box," said Paganini, much astonished, "a large box to your address?"

"Yes, sir," she replied. "The porter is waiting in the vestibule."

"A box?" said Paganini, much astonished. "I do not know what it is, but I do not like it either."

"But, sir, your address is on it."

"It is true, but that is all the same. I cannot conceive—where is the porter?"

"Here he is, sir. He says he is in a hurry."

"Where comes this box?" asked Paganini, regarding the box with suspicion. "From the office, sir. I do not know anything more about it, except that it was sent from Lyons or Orleans."

"Stranger and stranger," remarked Paganini. "I have not the slightest acquaintance in either of these cities."

He paid him, however, thanks for the interference of Louise, who had taken possession of the box.

The porter had hardly turned his back when Louise, glancing at the box with much curiosity, eagerly said: "I will assist you to take it up to your room, sir."

"Nonsense," replied Paganini, trying to refrain from smiling. "Leave it there in the corner. To-morrow we will be enough to attend to it."

"And you are not going to open it?" "Yes, indeed, I will, since you are so anxious to see its contents. Come, and we will have it open in a few moments."

They removed two layers of hay, several bundles of brown paper, cut a number of strings, and found at the very bottom of the box an old sabot.

"Well, I am not much surprised," said Paganini. "It is a very nice invention. They have sent me this sabot as an allusion to my avarice, and wish to say to me that I am like children, who rather receive than give; but they are very much deceived if they think they can wound my feelings by this unkind act. I will say in the presence of all the inmates of the house that before the end of the year this old sabot shall be worth its weight in gold."

Thereupon he retreated, with the wooden shoe, leaving the spectators in amazement as to what he had intended to do.

The old ladies seemed quite embarrassed. "It was they who had sent it, and Paganini was well aware of the fact, and forced them to do it. He had been very much deceived if they think they can wound my feelings by this unkind act. I will say in the presence of all the inmates of the house that before the end of the year this old sabot shall be worth its weight in gold."

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